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RR RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD  
DE RUEHBR #1425/01 2071808  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 261808Z JUL 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9589  
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0116  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0119  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0279  
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0106  
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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0116  
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0295  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4924  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 6363  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 5533  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 3525  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2253  
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RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6221  
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 1291  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 6974  
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 1328  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3744  
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 6979  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0465  
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 4826  
RUEHC/DOI WASHDC  
RUEAEP/HAQ EPA WASHDC  
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 001425

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES KARR-COLQUE  
DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [XR](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY  
FOREST MANAGEMENT

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SUMMARY  
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1. Rio Branco, Acre State, Brazil was the site of a weeklong conference of 250 community forest entrepreneurs and policy makers from Africa, Asia, Central and South America, July 15-23, 2007. Participants debated the challenges confronted by inhabitants of tropical forests on three continents: lack of legal access to land and financial support, excessive red tape, high taxes, and markets that are out of reach because of distance and bureaucratic barriers. These challenges were also reflected in a study issued during the conference by Forest Trends. This new study suggests that forest communities are responsible for the management of around 370 million hectares of natural forest, representing an investment in forests of US\$2.5 billion. In so doing, they provide environmental services important in combating climate change and protecting water sources, biodiversity and the natural landscapes prized by the international community. The event concluded with a call from the forest communities for more access to forest lands and to world markets.  
END SUMMARY

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EVENT LAUNCHES REPORT ON COMMUNITY FOREST ENTERPRISES  
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¶2. The event was an opportunity to launch a new study, which reports that community forest enterprises (CFEs) represent an annual investment of US\$2.5 billion in management and conservation in some of the planet's richest forest habitats. This is more than governments in tropical regions spend directly on forest conservation each year. Produced for ITTO by Forest Trends and its partners in a global coalition, the Rights and Resources Initiative, the report bases its conclusions on a review of current research and on 20 case-studies of successful enterprises in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific Islands.

¶3. Some 110 million people around the world are involved in forest enterprises harvesting wood, bamboo, rattan, fibers, nuts, resins, medicinal herbs, honey and other natural products, and, according to the study, granting land rights to these small communities working in sustainable forest industries is especially urgent.

¶4. The study contends that a top-down approach on the part of national governments and international NGOs and donor countries has prevented forestry enterprises from thriving. It argues that local communities need to be part of the equation and not just bystanders.

In those countries where efforts have been made to reduce barriers and guarantee ownership of forested land, as is the case in Mexico and Guatemala, the study reported that community-based enterprises took off and became profitable. In addition the study found that besides improving income and social cohesion in the communities, these organizations become important biodiversity conservation agents.

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CONCLUSIONS  
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¶5. Leaders of community forest enterprises in Africa, Asia and the Americas concluded the event calling for their governments to extend to traditional communities the same rights and financial support provided to the world's largest timber companies. "Only with support and access to land and markets can forest communities continue to conserve the world's remaining tropical forests while helping to fulfill the world's commitment to bring an end to poverty," said Alberto Chinchilla, representative of the Global Alliance of Forest Communities.

¶6. Participants at this first global meeting of community forest enterprise representatives made a series of recommendations that included a commitment to: a) work together to ensure that legal access to land and natural resources be included in the laws and/or constitutions of individual nations; b) lobby governments to provide lines of credit dedicated exclusively to community enterprises; c) adopt measures to combat poverty and encourage social justice and policies of inclusion within communities; d) call for the immediate suspension of high taxes imposed by governments on forest community enterprises; e) seek economic and administrative help to reach the consumer markets for sustainable products; and f) create, through ITTO, a special fund for financing community organizations.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. Community Forest Enterprises can be an important component of efforts to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable forest management. These enterprises can make a significant contribution to forest conservation because their efforts work towards valuing the intact forest worth more than a felled forest.

SOBEL